

**Focus Area B, Epidemiology and Surveillance Workgroup,
Animal Surveillance and Education Subgroup
January 12, 2005 – 2:00-4:00 PM
Tufts / Admin Building**

Attendees: Erica Berl, MA Department of Public Health (MDPH); Fredric Cantor (MDPH); Daniel Church (MDPH); Cheryl Gauthier (MDPH); Jack Hawkes, Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine (TUSVM); James Knight, MA Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA); Janet Martin (TUSVM); Charlie Kaniecki (MDPH); Hayley Murphy, Zoo New England (ZNE); Kerry O'Brien (MDPH); Lorraine O'Connor MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR); Mark Pokras (TUSVM); Alison Robbins (TUSVM); George Saperstein (TUSVM); Claudia Sarti (MDPH); Beth Suedmeyer (TUSVM); Sue Webb Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts (ACOAM).

Facilitator: Fredric Cantor (MDPH)
Chair: Fredric Cantor (MDPH)

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Minutes
 - a. Review Minutes 8/30/04 meeting
 - b. Review Minutes 11/30/04 meeting
 - Zoonotic Disease Orientation Seminar – After Action Report – DRAFT
 - Next steps
3. MDPH – CDC Cooperative Agreement Update
4. MDAR Program Update
5. Tufts Animal Surveillance Project Update
6. Other Projects / Issues
7. Next meetings

1. Introductions

Fredric Cantor welcomed the participants. Workgroup members introduced themselves and a participant sign-in sheet was circulated.

2. Minutes

a) Minutes 8/30/04

A correction to the name and affiliation of one participant was made to the 8/30/04 minutes. These minutes will now be reviewed internally at MDPH and eventually posted on the web.

b) Minutes 11/30/04: Zoonotic Disease Orientation Seminar – After Action Report – DRAFT

The draft of the Zoonotic Disease Orientation Seminar After Action Report was reviewed.

Some of the issues/gaps that were identified were discussed. Safety issues in day care centers with animals; The rabies advisory committee will review and suggest updates to existing animal control laws. Confusion exists regarding the role of the animal inspector vs. animal control officer. GIS coding needed for location of animal premises. Need for training in use of personal protective equipment for field inspectors and veterinarians. It was mentioned that the CDC has developed draft infection guidelines for veterinarians. Discussed the need to formalize information flow, protocols and guidelines to ensure appropriate and timely response and to prevent the “inappropriate” dissemination of information that could lead to economic consequences. Need to clarify protocols for what zoonotic disease is determined positive or a public health risk.

Lorraine O'Connor emphasized the need to vary response and notification based upon risk. For example DAR reporting to DPH and DPH response should be different depending on the strain of avian influenza. H5 and H7 are high-pathogenicity strains of avian influenza. Lorraine also mentioned concern for giardia or other illnesses in pet stores and potential health risk for employees or patrons.

Notification and communication: Charlie Kaniecki stated that Western Mass has had success in recruiting, hospitals, PH nurses, day care centers, local and state agencies, etc to use web-based communication-- Health and Homeland Alert Network (HHAN). There was discussion about the need for outreach to include more veterinarians in the system.

Animal disposal issues: Lorraine O'Connor: DEP wants to handle emergency response on a case-by-case basis; therefore specific

emergency plans for burial of animals have not been developed. Charlie Kaniecki agreed to try to contact people at DEP. George Saperstein mentioned that Kansas State has a new website describing appropriate methods of carcass disposal:

<http://fss.k-state.edu/research/books/carcassdisp.html>

Local Police Involvement: So far DAR has not needed to involve the local police when needing access to properties/quarantine issues.

Discussion of general notification system process: DAR would alert DPH who would alert others in the state as needed, if needed MA could alert other states via the CDC's EpiX (Epidemic Information Exchange).

Next steps for the After Action Report:

1. Discussion of upcoming conferences training to address weaknesses identified
2. There is a flu pandemic tabletop planned through the Center for Emergency Preparedness on January 24.
3. There has been some discussion of using this scenario to develop a public health nurse specific scenario
4. Fredric Cantor will review the Zoonotic Disease After Action Report's Analysis of Critical Task Performance Section and develop as a guide for ASE activities and projects to address identified gaps/needs.

3. MDPH – CDC Cooperative Agreement Update

- a) Internship available for PH students to work at local health departments. Spring session 2005 includes 7 students. Tasks may include general BOH duties, development of emergency preparedness plans or observe health inspections, etc. Summer 2005: paid internship probably including vet students, approximately \$13/hour. If more funds available will be able to include more students for this session. Currently advertise at UMASS, Amherst, and Boston University.

George Saperstein requested that consider advertising at Tufts med and vet school. Anthony Schlaff is the contact person at the medical school and Sam Telford is the contact person at the vet school.

- b) Surveillance Manual: MDPH, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization is updating its Surveillance Manual. It will refer to newly reportable diseases such as SARS and monkeypox and update protocols that may have changed since 2001. The manual should be distributed by the end of June 2005.
- c) Testing of 24 / 7 local health department coverage for infectious disease response is being planned.

Training programs: Cheryl Gauthier discussed existing MDPH trainings that could be tailored to veterinarians and their staff to address some of the gaps identified:

- a) Bioterrorism Level A training for sentinel laboratories
- b) Packaging and shipping course of potentially hazardous material.

4. MDAR Program Update

Two new hires in sight: a veterinarian or epidemiologist and an administrative assistant for data entry.

A database with name, address, phone number and animal species has been developed, merging the previously paper-based systems. Challenges are that many existing entries need to be completed, corrected, or updated. Often addresses are a city block or a P.O Box. GIS info should be added in order to have a precise location of the animals.

Reviewed that local animal inspectors visit all locations that house animals in a town and report 1x/year. Training sessions are available for animal inspectors but they are not required to attend. Close to 300 towns have animal inspectors. Animal control officers (often restricted to "dog officer" functions) work under state laws, animal inspectors work for MDAR.

MDAR website needs to be updated, but MDAR is severely under staffed: 5 people for the entire state. There was a brief discussion of linking of MDPH and MDAR websites. Ultimately, need to develop a data-sharing plan.

5. Tufts Animal Surveillance Project Update

PI is Mark Pokras. Staff involved in the project are: Janet Martin (research assistant professor), Alison Robbins (research assistant professor), Beth Suedmeyer (research assistant, database), Jack Hawkes (student). This is a pilot program from the TUSVM Wildlife Clinic. The first step is to define and develop a series of protocols for the project syndromes and diseases. A flow chart was presented outlining the various protocols and where they would be needed for the surveillance system information flow.

The second phase of the project will be held late spring/early summer 2005, will be to test and refine the protocols by submitting and processing specific samples.

Jack Hawkes mentioned as an example that 43 serum samples have been collected from raptors after trauma. Raptors could be a good indicator for Tularemia because they prey on rodents.

2 databases will be created:

a) Archived sample information - A tissue/serum database will be created for future retrospective studies.

b) Animal surveillance database: The wildlife clinic database will possibly be linked to the one of the small animal hospital and large animal hospital databases.

Cheryl Gauthier discussed that archived samples with identified BT agents need to be secured by either:

- a) destroying them
- b) registering them

Archive samples should not become a source of bioterrorism. This led to a discussion about awareness of these regulations among veterinarians and whether veterinary practices could have stored potential BT specimens in their freezers.

6. Other Projects / Issues

- a) Fredric Cantor discussed that TUSVM would be contracted to do research on and develop case definitions for zoonotic diseases in animals. They would also develop a questionnaire for veterinarians on their laboratory practices and specific knowledge of clinical

presentation of BT agents in Animals. MDPH and MDAR would then be able to use this information to develop internal response protocols.

- b) ASPCA Animal Surveillance Program offers a monthly report of poisonings reported to their hotline. A sample report was presented. Massachusetts's pet owners and veterinarians are frequent users of this service. This was presented as an existing source of information about poisoning-related causes of sudden death in animals.

8. Next meetings

Future meeting dates passed out

February 16, 2005, 2:00 - 4:00 pm (NOT 1:00 - 3:00 pm), Tufts, Wildlife Clinic.